

NRCS Alabama Current Developments



January 16, 2002

From The State Conservationist - *Robert N. Jones*

There is something about the New Year that is stimulating. It represents a new page – all the achievements of the past year, as well as any disappointments, are “filed” away. We have the opportunity to start fresh. This happens not only in our personal life, but also in our professional life. The New Year will bring many new challenges and opportunities, most of them unexpected. Let’s be prepared to accept every opportunity and face every challenge.

I recently found the following quote taped to the refrigerator in my mother’s kitchen. These words, authored by Mother Teresa, are worth remembering as we go about our lives.

- People are often unreasonable, illogical, and self-centered; *Forgive them anyway.*
- If you are kind, people may accuse you of selfish, ulterior motives; *Be kind anyway.*
- If you are successful, you will win some false friends and some true enemies; *Succeed anyway.*
- If you are honest and frank, people may cheat you; *Be honest and frank anyway.*

- What you spend years building, someone could destroy overnight; *Build anyway.*
- If you find serenity and happiness, they may be jealous; *Be happy anyway.*
- The good you do today, people will often forget tomorrow; *Do good anyway.*
- Give the world the best you have, and it may never be enough; *Give the world the best you’ve got anyway.*
- You see, in the final analysis, it is between you and God; *It was never between you and them anyway.*

Whatever the New Year has in store for us, as individuals and as an Agency, our attitude will be the key. As we go about our daily NRCS tasks, let’s remember who we are (federal employees) and what we have to offer (service). Let’s do everything within our power to make 2002 a very good year.

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

Bob

Winter Manure Spreading In North Alabama

Alabama NRCS staff worked closely with the local land grant university to develop the new Nutrient Management Standard–590 that establishes a time period (November 15th–February 15th) in north Alabama when nutrients (manure and nitrogen fertilizer) should not be applied to crops (cool season forage and small grains). During the period of December 15th to February 15th, crop growth is not sufficient to use nutrients, and if they are applied, nutrients can leach into water bodies. Nutrients must be applied prior to November 15th to be used by the crop before December 15th.

Although there has been a public outcry, technical and regulatory agencies in Alabama strongly feel that the right decision has been made.

The farming community understands the science and environmental reasons for the decision; however, they do not understand why adjoining states do not have the same policy or regulations, especially regarding nutrients from manure.

Turning Forage Into Beef And Profit

Alabama NRCS along with about 300 individuals participated in the Alabama Forage and Grassland Coalition conference to provide forage practice information to producers, vendors, and federal/state employees. A panel of experts presented a variety of ideas, concepts, and techniques for turning forage into beef for profit. Highlights of the conference included a presentation focused on practical herd expansion. Other presentations dealt with producing and utilizing forage crops.

MLRA-15 Soils News

Soils Of Alabama Video

The Alabama NRCS MO-15 soils staff worked with Dr. Doug Phillips, producer of the Discovering Alabama public television program, to create a Soils of Alabama video, with the support of the Alabama State Soil and Water Conservation Committee. The video was premiered at the annual meeting of the Alabama Association of Conservation Districts in November. Dr. Phillips attended the meeting and gave a brief explanation of how the video will be used. The Soils of Alabama segment will air in the spring and will be available after the first of the year. The video will be used to raise the awareness of the diversity of the soil in Alabama and the significance of soil in our environment. In addition to being a part of the Discovering Alabama public television broadcast, the video will be available to school systems throughout the state.

Soils Staff Helps Present Workshop

A soils workshop was held in November at the University of Florida in Gainesville. All soil scientists within the MO region were invited and about 50 attended the workshop. Instructors included personnel from the NRCS MO-15 staff, the National Soil Survey Center, and the Soil and Water Science Department at the University of Florida. Technical information covered during the workshop included

presentations on urban soils, Soil Taxonomy, manuscript prep and editing, NASIS, Coastal Plain geomorphology, landscape analysis, and hydric soils.

From The Field

Mobile Field Office

-- Mobile County NRCS/SWCD participated in a Holiday Open House at the Jon Archer Agricultural Center in Mobile in November. The goal of the function was to provide research-based information in the areas of agriculture, nutrition, health, safety, plant care, natural resources, housing, and community resources. Mobile County NRCS/SWCD, and the Coastal Alabama Clean Water Partnership hosted exhibits.

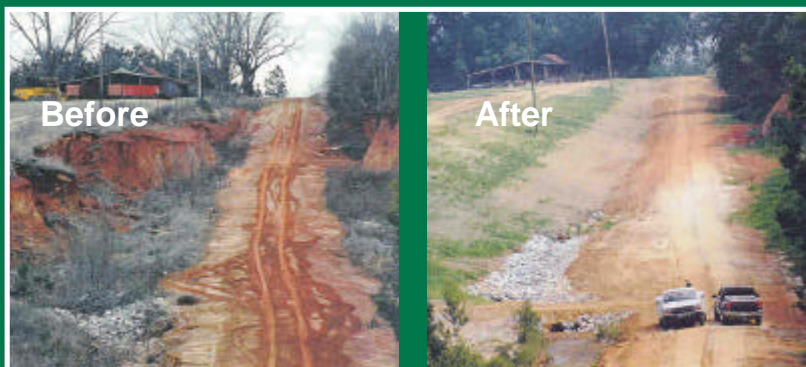
-- Joyce Nicholas is the new NRCS Soil Conservation Technician in the Mobile Field Office. Joyce began working as an Earth Team Volunteer in Mobile in 1998. Joyce really enjoyed the work and gained enough experience through her volunteer activities to be eligible for the SCT position. She previously worked as a County Agent Assistant with the Alabama Cooperative Extension System. She is currently enrolled at the University of Mobile working on her BS Degree. Joyce is married to Randy Nicholas and they have three children: Sally, Grace, and Blake. Grace is a junior at Auburn University majoring in Horticulture. Welcome aboard, Joyce!

Water Quality Success in Covington County

A tour of the Northeast Yellow River Watershed on November 1 spotlighted the partnership between NRCS, the Geological Survey of Alabama, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and Covington County's SWCD and County Commission. This partnership is dedicated to developing management practices to protect the water quality in Frank Jackson Lake. NRCS District Conservationist Steve Yelverton led over 50 people to five sites that were once major problem areas, but are now vastly improved due to installed erosion control measures. In addition to the goal to reduce the

amount of sediment entering streams and the lake, another was to prove through data collection by EPA that those practices are effective. A site in the area is one of the few in the United States being monitored by EPA.

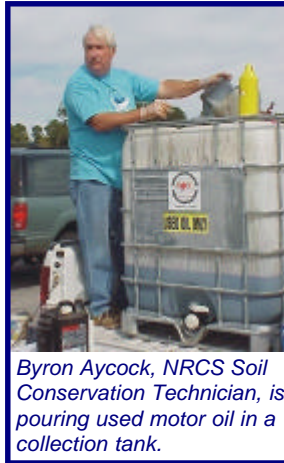
Other sites on the tour illustrated how outlets in terrace channels, sloping banks, rock flumes, and planting vegetation on banks stopped gullies that were encroaching on cropland, dumping tons of sediment into streams, killing trees, destroying aquatic habitats, and making travel along dirt roads dangerous.



"Old Boggy" is a county road that had excessive erosion and was depositing sediment into Frank Jackson Lake. Through this partnership, the problem was solved by installing rock flumes, outlets in terrace channels, sloping and vegetating the banks, and placing crushed limestone on the roadbed.

Used Oil Collected for Recycling Program

The Colbert County offices of NRCS/SWCD, the Alabama Cooperative Extension System, and Tuscumbia Utilities provided collection stations for an oil recycle collection day recently where a total of 323 gallons was turned in. "We had people bring oil in everything from plastic mouthwash bottles to metal barrels," said Kathy Gotcher, NRCS District Conservationist. "Some people brought in only a half-gallon of oil while others brought in over 50 gallons." The old oil was picked up by Project R.O.S.E. (Recycled Oil Saves Energy), Alabama's statewide used oil collection and recycling program. It will be used to make asphalt.



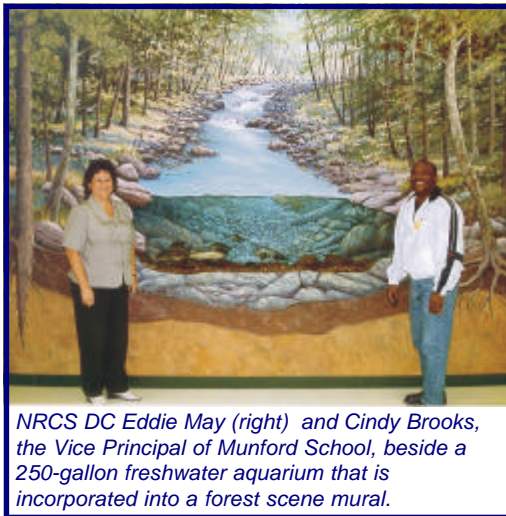
Byron Aycock, NRCS Soil Conservation Technician, is pouring used motor oil in a collection tank.

NRCS Helps Establish Exhibits at Munford Elementary School

The individuals designing the new school at Munford wanted a school that not only taught reading, writing, and 'rithmetic, but also a respect for and a better understanding of our natural resources. The vision became a reality with the co-operation of Talladega County NRCS/SWCD, Coosa Valley RC&D Council, many state and federal agencies, and private organizations.

Incorporated into the school are 18 mural exhibits—all of museum quality, many with hands-on interactive components. Also included in the exhibits is a 250-gallon freshwater aquarium. The exhibits and the aquarium enable the children to observe and to experience many activities involving plants, animals, and soil.

The entire school presents a beautiful approach to education. Local residents are excited to have this facility for the children.



NRCS DC Eddie May (right) and Cindy Brooks, the Vice Principal of Munford School, beside a 250-gallon freshwater aquarium that is incorporated into a forest scene mural.

Clay and Talladega Counties Team Up

NRCS and SWCD staff from Clay and Talladega Counties recently presented a program to Lineville High School students. Clay County NRCS District Conservationist (DC) Heidi Janes started off with a presentation about natural resources that included a segment on the importance of soils.

Talladega County NRCS DC Eddie May continued the program with a more in-depth look at soils and concluded with a "hands-on" activity with maps. The Clay County SWCD provided the students with activity sheets and treats.

Farm City Week in Autauga County

Autauga County DAC Paula Adams and her daughter, Krystle, participated in the Kindergarten Farm City Week Tour at Twin Valley Farms in November. Approximately 300 kindergarten students attended the day of fun and learning.

Paula and Krystle presented a puppet show using a script developed by Paula that explained the importance of conserving our natural resources.

The students obviously enjoyed the show. Paula said, "It held their attention much better than previous projects. When you are competing for attention with live farm animals, live fish, tractors, forestry equipment, and hay mazes, you better have something good to entertain them."

Northwest Alabama RC&D

With the help of Northwest (NW) Alabama RC&D and cooperating agencies, the Town of Waterloo



restored parts of the shoreline of Pickwick Lake to hide severe bank erosion. According to local anglers, over the past 30 years at least 50 feet of the shoreline eroded because of wave action from wind and boaters.

Teresa Stewart, RC&D Coordinator, said this project had been in their Plan of Work for a few years. It took a while to pull together all the local government agencies that worked to complete the project. The land is owned by TVA and leased to the Department of



Conservation and Natural Resources-Division of Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries. NW Alabama RC&D and TVA provided funding; Wildlife and Freshwater Fisheries provided equipment and labor; Rogers Group provided rip-rap at a reduced rate; and Clean Water Partnership (CWP), NRCS, and the Lauderdale County SWCD provided in-kind services.

Reaching Out

NRCS Hosts Troy State University Students

The State Office hosted a class of graduate students from Troy State University who were interested in conservation and in the work of NRCS. The staff talked about the mission, vision, and structure of the Agency, conservation programs, and the soils program. Students received materials about conservation programs and soil, and promotional items such as bookmarks and posters.

Career Day at Opelika High School

NRCS participated in the Science Career Day Fair held at the Opelika (AL) High School. An exhibit featured various Agency positions, and provided information on careers and position requirements.

Retiree News

We are saddened to hear that on December 16, 2001, the wives of two retired SCS employees died.

Elizabeth Boone Aiken, wife of deceased SCS'er Bill Aiken, was a TV and newspaper reporter whose career spanned 28 years (from 1952-1980) from which she received numerous awards. She was 87.

Joyce Barnes, wife of Jessie L. (Buddy) Barnes of Eutaw, died after a long battle with cancer. Buddy's mailing address is 907 Montgomery Street, Eutaw, Alabama 35462.

Now that you have your 2002 calendar in place, please mark the dates of April 25-26, 2002, for the NRCS/SCS retirees meeting in Guntersville. We look forward to a fine, well-attended meeting. Information about lodging and other details will be provided later. Stay tuned.

If you are not receiving announcements of the NRCS/SCS retiree meetings and wish to do so, contact Jesse Bush by phone (334) 749-0274 or by email cgbush@mindspring.com.

Personnel

Accessions

Joyce Nicholas, Soil Conservation Technician, Mobile, AL

Evelyn Bostick, Human Resources Assistant, Auburn, AL

Promotions

Michael Gunn, Soil Conservation Technician, Linden, AL

Anthony Hudson, Soil Conservationist, Anniston, AL to District Conservationist, Jasper, AL

Shawn Manning, Soil Conservationist, Athens, AL

Maurice Johnson, Soil Conservation Technician, Greensboro, AL

Reassignments

Christopher Ford, Soil Scientist, Hale County Soil Survey to Soil Scientist, Bibb County Soil Survey

Justin Norris, Soil Conservationist, Florence, AL to Soil Conservationist, Guntersville, AL

Roland Perry, RC&D Coordinator from Bay Minette, AL to District Conservationist, Livingston, AL

Amy Bell, Soil Conservationist, from Evergreen, AL to Monroeville, AL

Tim Poole, District Conservationist, Linden, AL to Soil Conservationist, Evergreen, AL

Transfer

John Curtis, Soil Conservationist, Hartselle, AL to District Conservationist, Murphy, NC

Retirements

Jimmy Clark, Soil Conservation Technician, New Brockton, AL

Robert Hawkins, District Conservationist, Brewton, AL

MacArthur Harris, Soil Survey Project Leader, Greensboro, AL

Joseph Patridge, Soil Conservationist, Scottsboro, AL